

Sunday 5-Dec-2021

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ "The days are coming," declares the LORD,
 "when I will make a new covenant
 with the people of Israel
 and with the people of Judah.

³² It will not be like the covenant
 I made with their ancestors
 when I took them by the hand
 to lead them out of Egypt,
 because they broke my covenant,
 though I was a husband to them,"
 declares the LORD.

³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel
 after that time," declares the LORD.

"I will put my law in their minds
 and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,
 and they will be my people.

³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbour,
 or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,'
 because they will all know me,
 from the least of them to the greatest,"
 declares the LORD.

"For I will forgive their wickedness
 and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 33:14-17

¹⁴ "'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

¹⁵ "'In those days and at that time
 I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;

he will do what is just and right in the land.

¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Saviour.'

¹⁷ For this is what the Lord says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel,

Luke 1:67-75

Zechariah's Song

⁶⁷ His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—

⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Sermon: The New Covenant

Intro

- **G'day** Church Family
- It would be great to have your **Bibles** ready and **open at Jeremiah 31** – from verse 31
- You can take **notes** on the **sermon outline** provided
- Let me **pray** first
 - *Father God as we look at how You conduct a loving faithful relationship with Your people – we are thankful for your love and grace and mercy towards us*
 - *We ask that you speak to our hearts and minds this morning*
 - *In Jesus name, we pray. AMEN*
- I don't know about you but as I'm getting older – I'm starting to think in some areas - the **old way was better than the new way**
 1. **Things** were **built to last** back in the day– **houses, cars, furniture and clothes**
 2. In the old days - **people had manners** – people used to say **please** and **thank you** – and **replied to your invitations**
 3. **Face to face** is better too - rather than talking to people on the **computer**
 4. **Sundays** – **used to be a proper Sabbath** – a time of **worship** and a time of **rest!**
- We can **debate whether the old ways or the new ways are better** over morning tea

- But - in our look our Bible passages this morning – we're **going to see** something new - **that is way better** - than the old way...

Context (Covenants)

- This morning we're going to be talking about the **New Covenant**
- So, we'd better **define** what a **covenant** is

[PowerPoint 1a-Covenant]

- *The term "covenant" is of **Latin origin** (con venire), meaning a **coming together**. It is **two or more parties coming together to make a formal agreement** – they **agree on certain promises they will keep, and agree to certain terms and responsibilities**.*

[PowerPoint 1b-Bible Covenant]

- In the Bible – a covenant (Hebrew - beriyt) means:
 - **Two or more parties** bound or joined together in a **formal agreement**
 - **Often the parties are God and His people**
 - These **formal agreements** were sometimes **sealed by either eating together** – or by **cutting an animal in half**
 - So, for **example**, When **God** made a **covenant** (cut a deal/agreement) with **Abram** that He would bless Abram with a son (Isaac) in **Genesis 15**, to **seal the deal**, God told Abram to bring a heifer, goat, ram, dove and pigeon. Abram **cut the animals in two and arranged halves opposite each other**; then God put Abram into a deep sleep; and **God sealed the deal by passing between the halves of the animal**, in the form of a smoking pot and flaming torch. Why did God do this? **God was reassuring Abram of His promise of descendants, land and blessings made in Genesis 12**, with a visual presence and **the idea was the deal was sealed with blood** – so it was like the two

parties would walk between the halved animals and say “*may this be done to me, if I do not keep my promise*”. However, in this case, God alone passed between the halved animals and the covenant deal was sealed by God alone. The covenant agreement didn’t depend on Abram, only on God; everything depended on God. **God was saying in essence, He would give His life if His promise was broken.**

There can be no greater encouragement to us as believers than knowing **God is eternal** - and can no more break a promise - than He can die!

- Now because we are looking at a **NEW** covenant – it stands to reason there **must have been an OLD covenant**
- **In fact, there were several covenants that God made in the Old Testament (OT)**

[PowerPoint 2-Covenants]

1. **In the Garden of Eden Covenant – God expected obedience from Adam and Eve – otherwise they would **surely die** (Gen 2:16-17)**
2. **In the Adam Covenant – God deals with the breaking of the first covenant – and God says - there will be **hostility between Satan and Eve’s descendants** - **Women** will experience **pain in child birth** - and **Adam (representing humankind) will struggle with creation** – which will now be **difficult to work with and is cursed** – and **finally death** will be the **fate of all living beings** (Gen 3:14-19)**
3. **In the Noah Covenant** –after the God flooded the Earth and Noah & his family were saved from this flood - **God promised** He would **never again flood the Earth** – God gave a **rainbow as a sign** of this promise (Gen 9)
4. **In the Abraham Covenant – God promised Abraham’s name would be great** (Gen 12:2); Abraham would have many descendants (Gen 13:6); He would

be father of many nations (Gen 17:4-5); God promises Abraham a new land, the Promised Land (Gen 12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18-21); and promises that all families in the world would be blessed through a descendant (seed) of Abraham (Gen 12:3; 22:18).

5. **In the Moses Covenant– God gave Moses the 10 commandments** (Ex 20) plus 613 laws – and God promised **blessings for obedience or curses for disobedience** (Deut 28)
 6. **In the Palestine or Land Covenant** – God expands on the land promised to Abraham (Deut 30:1-10) – according to this covenant if people disobeyed God, God would cause them to be scattered (Deut 28:25, 64) but if/when they obeyed God – **God would restore them** (Deut 30:5;10)
 7. **In the David Covenant** – In 2 Sam 7:8-16 - God promised that **David’s lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away permanently** (verse 16). There would be a time when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and **rule as king forever**. This future king is Jesus ([Luke 1:32-33](#)).
- Sometimes these OT covenants were **blood** covenants – where breaking the covenant required blood to be shed – for example:
 - **In the Eden and Adam Covenants** – disobedience brought death
 - **In the Abraham Covenant** – **animals were cut in half** and there was a promise that **someone would die if this promise was broken**
 - **In the Moses’ covenant** – **blood from animal sacrifice was to be sprinkled on the altar** for the people’s sins to be forgiven
 - In fact, according to the Bible - without the shedding of blood – **there was no forgiveness** (Lev 17:11; Heb 9:22)

The Problem with the Old Covenants

Now, because we're talking about a **NEW Covenant** – it **suggests that there is a problem with the OLD Covenant** – otherwise there would **be no need for a NEW One**

[PowerPoint 3-Problem]

- The **covenants** which were dependent on the people's obedience are a **big problem** – no matter how hard the **people** in the OT **tried** – they **could not keep God's rules fully or perfectly**
- So, by the time we get to **Jeremiah's day – 630-580 BC** – a few hundred years after King Solomon
- The **nation of Israel is divided** – north and south – the **kings have pretty much gone their own way and not followed God's way** – and they have **led the people astray**
- **Jeremiah prophesies** to the Southern part of Israel –which is **Judah**
- He tells the people of Judah earlier in Jeremiah 20:4-6 and Jeremiah 24, 25 and 27 that because of their disobedience – **they will be carted off to Babylon and into exile**
- But **Jeremiah also prophesies** that after 70 years – **God will bring the people out of exile and back to Judah** (Jeremiah 29:10)
- And so, we come to our passage – this morning

[Please turn to Jeremiah 31:31-34]

- Jeremiah describes another Covenant – the **New Covenant**

What the New Covenant looks like (Jeremiah 31:31-34; 33:14-17)

- What will this **New Covenant look like?**

[PowerPoint 4-New Covenant]

- This new covenant is **made with the whole nation of Israel** – north and south – and **ultimately with all humankind**
- It will be **different to the old covenant** – because the **people were unable to keep the old covenant** – they kept breaking it - by sinning
- **God** describes His **relationship** with His people as being **like a marriage** – where **God** is always the **faithful husband** – but unfortunately the **people are an unfaithful wife**
- So, with this new covenant – God will make it possible for His **people to have His law written on their hearts** – and not just written externally on stone tablets or on paper
- God says in this new covenant – **people will have a way of having personal knowledge of the Lord** – and **God promises** there will be **a way of their sins and wickedness being forgiven and remembered no more**
- This suggests a **new method of forgiveness** which doesn't involve the continual sacrificing of animals for sins to be forgiven
- Jeremiah goes on to say in our 2nd OT reading
[[Please turn to Jeremiah 33:14-17](#)]
- How this new covenant is possible
- Jeremiah says **God will send a Branch from King David's family** – that is a **descendant of David** will come – and reign forever
- And He will be a **Righteous Saviour**
- Righteous meaning – **right with God and approved by God**
- And being a Saviour – **He will be the One to save people from the punishment of their sins** – and **bring about this forgiveness**
- And of course, it's the **birth of this Saviour** – Jesus - that we are building up to celebrate on Christmas Day

The Good News of the New Covenant (Luke 1:67-75)

- We fast forward **580 years** from Jeremiah's time

[PowerPoint 5-Good News]

- To our **NT passage from Luke 1:67-75** and it's just before the birth of Jesus

[Please turn to Luke 1:67-75]

- And we have a **priest called Zechariah** – he's **about to become a father** to his new born son **John the Baptist** – who is **Jesus' cousin** –
- And **Zechariah** is filled with the Holy Spirit – and he **sings a song** - first about Jesus and - then later about his own son, John, to be born
- We're only looking at the lyrics about Jesus – and they are amazing
 - God Himself has come to His people – in the **form of this baby Jesus** to be born – v69
 - **Jesus will redeem His people** – that's the restoration promised by Jeremiah
 - **Jesus will be a horn of salvation** – that's the salvation promised by Jeremiah
 - **Jesus will be from the house of David** – as promised by Jeremiah
 - **Jesus will continue the covenant promise God made to Abraham** – the promise of blessing all nations - through one of Abraham's descendants
- But how is Jesus able to do what the old covenants couldn't' do?
 - Well – that's because Jesus – is **no ordinary baby**
 - **Jesus** is fully human and fully God
 - So, Jesus is able to **keep God's rules perfectly** – He doesn't sin and can't sin
 - And **Jesus becomes the way for people to be forgiven by God** - as Jeremiah promised

- **Jesus becomes the way that God remembers sins no more – as Jeremiah promised**
- **Because Jesus is willing to die on a cruel roman cross – and take the punishment for our sins on His shoulders – and to die our death for our sin – so we go unpunished and receive forgiveness**
- At Jesus' last meal with His disciples – Jesus describes – His pending death
- Reading from **Matthew 26:27-28**
- ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*
- **See how this new covenant also requires BLOOD**
- **But it's perfect blood – from a perfect sinless God/Man**
- **And His sacrifice is a perfect once and for all sacrifice for sins - because He's God's Son dying for His people**
- **Remember how we said that the covenants in the OT required that if it was broken -someone had to die**
- **The crazy thing is – Jesus didn't break the covenant – we did – we sinned – not Him – but He died instead of us**
- **That's crazy, isn't it?**
- **That's grace – AMAZING grace - we'll sing about that later**
- **That grace is the Gospel – which means Good News!**
- **And that Good News continues - because **Jesus rose 3 days after His death** – and **offers eternal life** –**
- **And the Good News continues – because when **Jesus ascended to Heaven** – **He promised to send the Holy Spirit (HS)** – so every believer is born from above – born of the Spirit (John 3:5) – and the HS lives inside each believer**

- (John 14:17) – the HS helps us remember Jesus’ teaching (John 14:26) – the HS convicts of our sins (John 16:8-11) – the HS guides us in all truth (John 16:13) – and the HS writes God’s commands on our hearts (Hebrews 10)
- The other amazing thing is that – **Jesus fulfills all those old covenants**
 - **Eden Covenant** – **Jesus is able to fully obey God** - where Adam and Eve couldn’t
 - **Adam Covenant** – **Jesus is able to reverse the curses laid on Adam and Eve** – Satan and the punishment for sin are defeated at the cross – **death is no longer a problem** – because of Jesus’ resurrection – and Jesus promises to return to restore everything one day -and as believers we are a new creation in Jesus (2 Cor 5:17)
 - **Abraham Covenant** – Because of Jesus – we are descendants of Abraham and in God’s family; we are blessed through Abraham’s descendant Jesus
 - **Noah Covenant** – Just as God provided a way for Noah and His family to be saved from God’s wrath in sending a flood – God has provided Jesus as the way to save us from God’s wrath to come (1 Thes 1:10) – if you like - **Jesus is our Ark to safety**
 - **Palestine or Land Covenant** – Jesus gives us the certain hope of our own promised land – **in Heaven**
 - **Moses Covenant** -Jesus is able to obey all God’s commandments and fulfil the law and sacrifices for sin completely
 - **David Covenant** – As a descendant of David – **Jesus is the promised forever King of Heaven and Earth**
 - You see God always keeps His promises – and all His promises find their fulfillment in Jesus – the perfect Priest, Prophet, King and Sacrifice

- For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ (2 Cor 1:20)

Our Response (Hebrews 12:1-3)

We must have response to Jesus’ New Covenant – this morning

Thank You Jesus – is barely enough

Our response to Jesus, the Righteous Branch, the author of the New Covenant is as follows is from Hebrews 12:1-3 **[READ]**

[PowerPoint 6-Heb 12:1-3

Our Response (Hebrews 12:1-3)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great *cloud of witnesses*, let us *throw off everything that hinders* and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us *run with perseverance* the race marked out for us,² *fixing our eyes on Jesus*, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners*, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

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- Remember we have all those previous champions of faith as spectators from Heaven cheering us on as we live out our faith (v1) and face trials, persecutions and struggles
- We can’t just simply go thank You Jesus and keep on sinning – see v1 - We must **throw off anything that hinders or distract us from following Jesus** – and throw off the sins that try to entangle us (v1) –
- We must keep **running our race of faith** (like a marathon) **with perseverance** (v1)

- We must **fix our eyes on Jesus**, the pioneer (of the new covenant) and perfecter of our faith – **He is our example to follow** – God has begun a work in us, that Jesus will finish (or perfect)
- **Jesus looked past the horror of the cross** – to the everlasting joy of Heaven – **we must do the same** – look past the tough times of this life – and **look forward to the eternal joy of Heaven**
- If we consider what Jesus went through to establish this new covenant of forgiveness and eternal life; we will not be discouraged but encouraged that we are following in Jesus' footsteps and as Paul wrote in Romans 8:17 – *we share in His sufferings in order that we also share in His glory*
- So, here's my **Christmas challenge to us** – here's **one way of fixing our eyes on Jesus:**
- In the **Gospel of Luke** – there are **24 chapters** – if we **read one chapter per day** throughout **December** – and we'll have to **read 1 to 5 today to catch up** -we will read the **whole of Jesus' life story** by Christmas Day – and we can have a much better understanding of why Jesus came and ushered in this New Covenant of His blood!

Let's pray...

Father God, thank you that you love us with an eternal love and that you always keep your promises

*Thank you that you sent Jesus to bring the New Covenant on that first Christmas Day
Help us to fix our eyes firmly on Jesus – and throw off any sinful thoughts/actions and throw off any distractions.*

In Jesus Name, we pray. AMEN